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natural to the ordinary spectator. For example the Greek wonder-worker, Cratisthenes, of whom Athenaeus<sup>21</sup> speaks, used to bring it into being spontaneously, and we cannot doubt that what this public entertainer could do to amuse an audience was also in the repertoire of the crafty priest and the professional magician for their unholy purposes. This perhaps raises the general question *what* combustibles of special potency that are commonly reckoned the monopoly of modern times were really within the reach of the ancient impostor. In the first place, we must mention bitumen in all its various forms. The Biblical student recognizes the 'slime' of which we hear in the Old Testament as merely one of these, a sort of asphaltic mortar or partially evaporated petroleum. Nor need we be told what Pliny's water that could be used in place of oil actually was.

The extraordinary inflammability of naphtha was a matter of wonderment even to the much travelled Alexander the Great, as Plutarch<sup>22</sup> shows in a story that incidentally illustrates the enviable freedom of the investigator and researcher in an age when the life of a man was not yet valued so inordinately above that of a sparrow, and societies with long names were so officiously blocking the progress of the Juggernauts of science. For he tells us how for the king's edification they first tested this fluid, by sprinkling it on a lane leading to his quarters, and then setting it on fire. But the lightning rapidity with which the flames spread led next to the application of the naphtha to a small boy named Stephanus, who didn't seem to anybody to be of any special value. By the time a sort of bucket brigade had put out the fire in this experiment, the value of the youngster had still further depreciated, but Alexander had had an unforgettable lesson in physics. Moreover, Plutarch himself feels indebted to the little Stephanus for what seems to him a reasonable theory that it was this same liquid that Medea used when she anointed the crown and mantle which she gave to Creon's daughter. This view, indeed, appears to have eventually won general acceptance; for I find in the *De Bello Gothico*<sup>23</sup> of the sixth century historian Procopius that it was known in his time as the *Μηδείας ἔλαιον*, or 'oil of Medea', and the soldiers mixed it with sulphur and asphalt to hurl upon the battering-rams of besiegers. That it was one of the ingredients of the mysterious compound called Greek fire (sulphur, saltpeter and naphtha), which played such an important part in the battles of Byzantine times, can hardly be doubted.

Now this story of Plutarch's about the world

conqueror and globe-trotter Alexander, together with other evidence that need not be retailed here, indicates that petroleum was not so well known even to the best informed Greeks and Romans that it would not be serviceable in various sorts of deception. It is, however, one thing to suggest the *probability* that it was so employed and quite another to ferret out clear *proof* of its use. Such proof is, however, forthcoming in more than one author. Thus Galen tells us how a miracle-worker would smear a wall or a stone with a mixture of brimstone and fluid asphalt, and then, extinguishing a lamp, immediately relight it by bringing the wick near this mixture. Of course, in those days, a vapor that could not be perceived by the naked eye was as good as non-existent for an ignorant layman.

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(To be Concluded.)

## REVIEWS

Selected Essays of Seneca and the Satire on the Deification of Claudius. Edited by Allan P. Ball. New York: The Macmillan Co. (1908). Pp. 211. 60 cents.

Select Letters of Seneca. Edited by W. C. Summers. London: The Macmillan Co. (1910). \$1.10.

Vie de Sénèque. By René Waltz. Paris (1909).

Un Philosophe Ministre. By R. Pichon, in *Revue des deux Mondes* (September, 1910).

Seneca. Physical Science. By John Clark and Sir Archibald Geikie. London: The Macmillan Co. (1910). \$3.25.

The literature embraced in these volumes dealing with Seneca's prose writings is of a varied character. It reveals the versatile philosopher along many lines. We cannot resist the thought that within a comparatively short space of time scholars have begun to take him seriously, to give him the attention he deserves. Not to speak of rhetoric in all its persuasive branches, one finds in this supposedly superficial thinker an encyclopædic knowledge of government, philosophy, and natural science.

The selection of essays in Mr. Ball's book is consistent and chronological. He aims to give us a sort of bird's-eye view of Seneca's mind as it changed with the philosopher's environment (cf. the Introduction, 22). The Polybius reveals discontent; the essay on Clemency is in the spirit of the tutor who, with a calm face and a troubled heart, launches his pupil into the Roman vortex. And the Letters show the philosopher in his attitude of courageous resignation. Mr. Ball also includes the Apocolocyntosis, explaining its presence as due to a need for the presentation of the satiric side of the man's character. The book is clear and well put

<sup>21</sup> 1.19 E. Cf. Eustathius on Od. 4.417-418 = vol. I, p. 175, lines 1 ff.

<sup>22</sup> Vit. Alex. 35 = 685.

<sup>23</sup> 4.11.

together; it leaves out nothing which an intelligent undergraduate ought to know<sup>1</sup>.

Mr. Summers takes up the thread where Mr. Ball left it; or rather, since he includes only the Letters in his selection, it would be truer to say that he specializes to a greater extent. The letters which he has chosen will meet with the approval of Seneca-lovers. We miss, however, the forty-first, with its beautiful *sacer intra nos spiritus sedet malorum bonorumque nostrorum observator et custos*, where the *deus incertus* dwells, "not in temples made with hands". Letter 104 was excluded presumably on grounds of length; it presents a picture of the old philosopher wrestling manfully with illness, like Stevenson at Samoa. But who that loves an author does not wish a volume of his selections increased?

The Apparatus Criticus contains a good many emendations. One cannot help thinking that there are too many. Some are conservative; for example, in 76, p. 74, line 6, *siparum Alexandrinarum insigne (indicium) est*, Mr. Summers accepts *indicium*, which is without doubt a gloss, according to most editors, and implies that the missing *et* will be more easily inserted than *indicium* discarded. Again, in 122, p. 145, lines 7 ff., there is included in the text a conjecture which is perfectly well attested as far as usage goes, but which is not necessary. *Officiosior meliorque, si quis illum (diem) exspectat* makes good sense if translated 'One is more of a business man and a better fellow on general principles, who is ready when the day comes', in other words, is ready for the day. And it is unnecessary to write *non exspectat*. As to the doubtful *lucem primam exiit* which follows, any one of the three suggestions offered in Hense's footnote is better. *Excitat*, 'wakes the dawn', will hardly do; Seneca is referring to men and not to barnyard fowl. This Apparatus, however, glows with good ideas, such as that indicated in 90, page 128, line 19, *incrumentatae* for *incrumentae*. Some are daring, like the suggestion of *tubulos* for *tabulas* in 56, p. 62, line 7, with the ingenious explanation of the water-pipe tester. Some are tempting, like *quid est enim quare*, in 33, p. 34, line 8.

But the debt which every scholar gladly owes to the editor of this book is section C of the introduction. Here is a thorough investigation of Seneca's imitators and detractors, enriched by wide reading, and worked out with literary taste. I have indicated elsewhere a few additions to the list<sup>2</sup>; suffice it only to say that the material collected runs from Suetonius to Swinburne and omits no class of literature with which any cultivated reader would be familiar.

The book should be used for honor reading in college courses, and could very well be inserted into

a regular course in Roman letter-writers: in that field Seneca is of equal importance with Cicero and Pliny.

The best life of Seneca, critically worked out and attractively set forth, is that of M. Waltz. The point on which the author focuses his attention is the political significance of the Prime Minister. After an account of the manhood of this brilliantly trained Spaniard, and his exile, we enter upon a series of chapters dealing with the Agrippina problem and Seneca's elevation to the tutorship of Nero. Up to this division of the work (Book 2), the essay is mainly personal, discussing the life of the rhetorician, his success at the bar, and his exile. We read, as if in a novel, of the sun-scorched sands and the heart-wearying loneliness of Corsica, of tragedies written to pass the time, and a morbid dwelling on the injustice that connected the philosopher's name with one of the court beauties and denied him the life which he loved so much. There is a Gallic touch, such as we feel in Victor Hugo, a dramatic emphasis and a love of the picturesque. But the facts are not distorted. The spirit of the whole work reminds us of Boissier, with perhaps a little less restraint. The author attempts to give us a rounded whole, as did his great predecessor in Ciceron et ses Amis, and works dealing with the early Empire.

'We owe to Agrippina', says M. Waltz, 'a second Seneca, much greater than the first, one who approaches new troubles, but along a path of glory; one who records and realizes, by his masterly accomplishments, a hundred years before Marcus Aurelius, the ideal of the ancient sages—the philosopher who rules a state'. The imperial tutor tries 'to make Nero a virtuous comedian in order to prevent him from becoming a vicious ruffian'. The tutor, in the background, directs the son in his duel with Agrippina.

M. Waltz justifies the taste of the Apocolocyntosis; he also shows that much of Seneca's Stoicism during this period was developed in an attempt to restrain Nero.

Book 3 proves the interesting thesis that there was nothing new in the administration of Seneca and Burrus. They were returning to the ideas of Augustus, endeavoring to place more power in the hands of the Senate<sup>3</sup>. This was done by legal and financial reform. The judicial functions of the treasury officials were lessened; collusion between plaintiff and defendant was repressed; and finances were centralized by getting the *aerarium* closer to the Emperor, in other words, to his ministers. There were no cases of the application of the law of *maiestas* on record during Seneca's ministry. But in regard to M. Waltz's remarks about the general

<sup>1</sup> For a more extended notice of this book see THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 3.166-167.

<sup>2</sup> Proceedings of the American Philological Association, 43. xxvi-xxix.

<sup>3</sup> M. Pichon, however, thinks that this endeavor was merely nominal.

benevolence of this epoch, we must remember that the police-court and a philosopher's study are two different domains.

We fail to see just why Corbulo's Parthian ventures need occupy so large a space; Seneca's part therein, for all we know definitely, could have been dismissed in a sentence or two. M. Pichon indicates his belief that here, as in several other passages, M. Waltz is indulging in attractive conjectures. Why need the author seek to find the exact date of Seneca's consulship? Again, it is hardly justifiable to use all the language about plain living and high thinking, which we find in the Epistles, as direct adjuncts to the facts of Seneca's latter days as seen in Tacitus and Dio Cassius. To call Seneca 'the arch thrown over the abyss between the Augusto-Tiberian age and the period of the Antonines', is bold; but it is perhaps warranted by Pliny, N.H.14.4 Annaeo Seneca, princeps tum eruditionis ac potentiae. The story of the Minister's attempted resignation is vivid but too long-drawn-out.

It is invidious, however, to be critical of the method, since the purpose of the book is to tell a scholarly story and not to heap up scholarly facts. It is true that the outlines could have been set down in fifty pages, but then the book would not be what it is—a charming and indispensable volume for those who would really understand Seneca.

Of distinct importance is the translation of the *Naturales Quaestiones*, by Mr. Clark. The work has been difficult, because of peculiarities in text and style, for the original aims at epigram in the midst of scientific technicalities. These epigrams are well handled in the English, and with a certain flavor. For example, Mr. Clark catches the spirit of *ad speculum suum immolandum fuit* (Book 1, Chapter 15) in "he richly deserved to be offered up as a victim before his own mirror-idol", and that of 4.13, *pro nihilo est familiaris rigor*, in "a stimulant that is habitual is no stimulant at all". In 2.42, "call the gods into council as if he were himself lacking in counsel", the word-play is directly reproduced. These phrases are crisp in Latin and in English. We notice, however, a tendency to colloquialism: e.g. 1.17, "everything has got mixed up"; "that's all", 2.9; the use of "why" in beginning a declarative sentence; "up on high there", 1.13; and "I cannot refrain from trotting out", 4.6, where the Latin verb is merely *proferam*. Sometimes a phrase is rendered too fantastically: e.g. "drives athwart", 1.1; "ply the earth", 3. Praef. "Dowers" for *aquileges*, 3.15, is picturesque. Sometimes the meaning is obscure: e.g. "But they do not blend in one that troop", 1.5; or, "offers the slightest obstruction to their escape", 3.26, which is an attempt to render *minus ad exitum repugnabat*. And we do not feel that Seneca, who is either the essence of crispness or the quintessence of fulness, would care for such a thinly spread

translation as "stealing under sea by secret sluice", 3.26, for *agere sub mare cursum*. And in regard to his text we much prefer the reading of Haase (1887), in 5.18, *cum effugerimus procellosos desuper montes, per quos praeceps in navigantes ventus impingitur*, to the original of Mr. Clark's "When we have escaped the billows that rise like mountains above us, into which the raging wind forces all voyagers".

But these doubtful renderings are inevitable in a translation which has for its object the unfolding of a style like Seneca's, or a subject like Physical Science as it was handled by the ancients in days when there were no specialists as such, and the writer was compelled to be somewhat of a journalist in his methods. The discussion of Mss is relegated to an occasional footnote, merely indicating the translator's reliance upon Gercke; and the main feature of the Introduction is the claim that Seneca was the scientific mainstay of the Middle Ages until Aristotle came to the fore in the thirteenth century.

Sir Archibald Geikie has done us a great service. In a resumé at the end of the book he gives an abstract of the whole work in its relation to modern science. Though his thirty pages show unmistakable signs of the expert who delivers a running commentary and takes much detailed knowledge for granted, yet we are glad to have the chaff separated from the wheat and the work of an ancient scientist taken more or less seriously by a modern.

The chaff in the *Naturales Quaestiones* is as follows: Seneca is, of course, absurd, says Sir Archibald Geikie, in believing the story about the marvellous river which dyes the wool of sheep; he is absurd again, in giving credence to the melting of the joints of statues under the hot sun of the Nile valley. Professor Geikie shows that the balls of fire on a ship's mast are atmospheric and not connected with shooting stars, and that the circles which run through a pool of water cannot be compared with sunlight shining through clouds. Nor did Seneca understand the decomposition of white light in a glass rod. The Etesian winds do not hold back the bulk of Nile water in summer time; nor will the ancient theory of swollen air account entirely for seismic manifestations. And Sir Archibald backs Vergil against Seneca with regard to the S.E.-S.W. trend of the winds in the storm in the first book of the *Aeneid*.

He admits that the Latin philosopher had good ideas as to the sun's size and the orbits of comets beyond the zodiac. He is satisfied in general with the remarks on atmosphere, but refuses any soundness to the theory of rainfall, due to ignorance of the principle of evaporation. Most of the matter on earthquakes is accepted as a valuable contribution to knowledge. And, on this same subject, the simile of water receding through a tiled floor and being

discharged again when the earthquake shock is over, delights the modern investigator.

Mr. Clark is inclined to hold that the *Naturales Quaestiones* are fragmentary in places and that they were incomplete at the time of Seneca's death. He says that the work was composed in 63-64 A.D., and bases his opinion on the Campanian earthquake of 63, besides other possible indications. But M. Waltz, in the book referred to above, holds, that the *Quaestiones* were published in 62-63, in three separate instalments. We confess that Mr. Clark's idea is to us the more convincing.

This translation, therefore, with its accompanying excursus, is welcome. It is a step towards the modern idea of interpreting the Classics in a modern way.

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In *The Evening Mail* (New York) of January 15 last, Mr. Emory J. Haynes, who contributes frequent essays to that paper, wrote on College Education. Part of what he says is of interest to supporters of the Classics:

... The deprecation of college education in which some men indulge is not to be taken at face value. Those splendid ages called classic are a passage in the world's history. Not to know Greece and Rome is not to know what man is on this globe. Not to know Homer and Shakespeare may not count in a shop, but it does count as an immense gap in honest self-consciousness when a man measures himself from the mind side of existence.

Why do many rich and burdened men in advanced years continue in the galling harness? Not a little because 'business' constitutes all they know of human life. The costly libraries in their palatial homes do not attract them, for they do not know books. They have never met the great, world-long line of authors. They cannot find, within themselves, the sources of happy leisure.

But it is precisely these sources of happiness that compensate countless college-educated men for a daily life of a small salary and a poor wage. Once away from the office of a humble clerkship, these men are rich in the exquisite companionship of their books. They prize the store of polite learning that they possess. They are more than content.

A great corporation pays them a small clerical salary for certain daylight hours. But once free, at evening, they are princes. They know the poets and philosophers of all ages. They are never at a loss when left alone. Money to them is a servant, not a master—a means, not an end.

Who will dispute that this is an ideal life? The college-trained man, just graduated, realizes two things. He knows how little he really knows. But he knows exactly where any kind of human knowledge is to be had. Again, is not that the ideal position of a human mind? ... And this very day the college would do vastly more in such training, if trained teachers had full control. It is allowing immature boys to elect their own studies that makes the college training of today less valuable than of old.

At the general meeting of The Classical Association of England and Wales there was a discussion of The Teaching of Latin. Mr. W. L. Paine, Secretary of the Association for the Reform of Latin Teaching, opened the discussion. The debate was summed up as follows in the *London Times*:

Much time could be saved and better results obtained by the application of direct or oral method principles during the first two years of study. It was said that grammar was not included in the teaching by the direct method, but in fact they taught grammar as rigorously as under the traditional method. It was also urged that they did not make use of translation. They did not use translation; they aimed at it. Finally, they were told that they shirked difficulties, but they were making a vigorous attack on the real difficulties of a foreign language. There was now a steadily growing demand among teachers for acquiring direct methods of teaching.

Professor Dobson said that the invention of the oral method was based upon the assumption that the present method of classical education was wholly bad. He did not agree.

Professor Sonnenschein wrote to say that he was an adherent of oral methods, but that the use of Latin as a means of explaining Latin at an early stage was strictly limited.

It was resolved unanimously to appoint a committee to inquire into the subject of oral methods of teaching.

At this meeting the President, Sir Frederic Kenyon, delivered an address on the Value of the Classics, from which we may find space to quote presently. It may interest our readers to see what points are urged in England on this subject. Meanwhile reference may be made to a speech on Classical Culture delivered by Mr. Asquith as President of this Association, and reprinted in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 2.74-77.

### CLASSICAL ARTICLES IN NON-CLASSICAL PERIODICALS

- Athenaeum*—Dec. 13, A Terence Lexicon, J. S. Phillimore; Dec. 20, Fragments of Two Manuscript Poems by Sappho, Claire Gaudet: Notes from Oxford (Compulsory Greek in Responses): The Westminster Play (Andria); Dec. 27, (Gulielmi Shakespeare Carmina quae Sonnets nuncupantur Latine reddita ab Aluredo Thoma Barton); Jan. 3, (J. G. Frazer, The Golden Bough, 3rd ed. Pt. 7: Balder the Beautiful and the Doctrine of the External Soul).
- Contemporary Review*—Jan., The Testimony of Josephus to Jesus Christ, W. Emory Barnes: Christmas in Rome, Giovanni Piol: The Modern Greek and his Ancestry, Albert Thumb.
- Dial*—Jan. 1, Devouring the Classics, R. Shafer (short note).
- Hibbert Journal*—Jan., (Gilbert Murray, Euripides and his Age, Lawrence Solomon).
- Independent*—Oct. 30, A Soliloquy of Aeschylus, A New Poem by Robert Browning.
- Nation* (New York)—Dec. 25, (Sir Thomas Heath, Aristarchus of Samos); Jan. 8, Fun in Latin (Westminster Play): (Rudolph Schevill, Ovid and the Renaissance in Spain [Notes]: Note on the British Museum Acquisition of Roman Mosaic from Romain-en-Gallia [Art]; Jan. 15, Ancient Empire (W. S. Ferguson, Greek Imperialism).
- Nation* (London)—Dec. 30, The Gods are Dead, E. Melbourne (poem): (J. G. Frazer, The Golden Bough, Pt. 6: The Scapegoat).
- Nineteenth Century and After*—Jan., Tiberius Gracchus and his Judges, J. W. Robertson-Scott.
- Outlook*—Dec. 27, (L. Whiting, Athens the Violet-Crowned); Jan. 17, (C. H. Weller, Athens and its Monuments).